



men™

never said no to  
sandwiches  
which were  
smuggled out of saga.

The

But  
Wait!

VOLUME TWENTY SIX  
ISSUE TWO



Everyone is loved.



THE Key

to your heart can simply be found over the river and through the woods  
as long as you know where to look.

Each



of the leaves { *despite wind*  
still on the trees *and nature's*  
*natural course* }



is a

Every



*champion.*

Kiss a stranger.



Hug a friend.



Smile at a lover.



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## omen

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### layout & editing

Josh Hilliard Magique the Man-Star Snow Imp (1992)  
Jacob Lefton The Friendlies (coming in 2008)  
Molly McLeod Cobi the Cubist Mountain Dog (1992)  
Stephen Morton Snowlet (1998)

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Molly McLeod  
Back Cover by:  
Andrew Flanagan

THE OFFICIAL OMEN HAIKU:

*Views in the Omen* (5)  
*Do not necessarily* (7)  
*Reflect the staff's views* (5)



*This year's Olympic Mascots!*  
*A snowball & an Ice cube!*

## to submit

Submissions are due Saturdays before 5 p.m. You can submit in rich text or plain text format by CD, and typed hard copies will also be accepted, reluctantly. Label your disks well and they will get back to you. Get your stuff to Jacob Lefton, Merrill B307, x4371. You may also use e-mail. Send e-mail submissions to [jwl04@hampshire.edu](mailto:jwl04@hampshire.edu)

**And be sure to read our policy box at the bottom of the next page before submitting.**

**Visit the Omen's barely updated website! [omen.hampshire.edu](http://omen.hampshire.edu)**

Unlike Hidy and Howdy, the Western Canadian Welcome polar bears, we will not eat you face.

- Jacob Lefton

## STRIP ME DOWN AND GREASE ME UP, BABY, I'M GOING WRESTLING!

## Editorial

by Jacob Lefton, Editor-in-Chief

Wikipedia says, "Among other things, [The Olympic Committee] claims an exclusive monopolistic copyright on any arrangement of five rings, irrespective of alignment, color or lack thereof, as well as to any use of the word 'Olympic.'"

Of course, they filed the copyright with the Athens branch of the Greek Patent Office some time around 800 B.C. They are grandfathered into new patent law (Roman and post-imperial), so their copyright has not expired. This explains why the Olympics (25¢ to write that, just so you know) Committee can put together such a lavish event that celebrates the lower evolutionary functions of humans. (Lower functions are the physical skills as opposed to the mental ones, which are more of an evolutionarily advantage in the grand scheme of things.)

I'd like you to know that I've gone to great troubles to bash the Olympics. Acquiring the rights to those five gray rings in the middle of the page cost a pretty penny. Just know that \$500 of the money you pay to the student activities fund is going to that license, and an additional \$25 for each reproduction. We publish 300 issues, so that's about \$8000 total, plus twenty-five cents for each mention of the Olympics, also per reproduction.

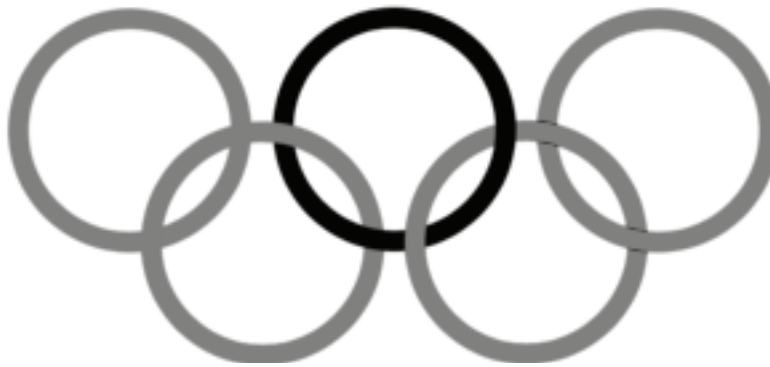
The Olympics was originally a religious festival to honor Zeus and a mythical chariot racer named Pelops.

It gained popularity over the years. At its height, probably long before the Romans outlawed it in 393AD as a Pagan celebration, it had grown to twenty events spread over several days. All contestants were naked and covered in oils, which added a nice lustre to their skin. They were naked, because the event was partially a celebration of the achievements of the human body. Just think: hundreds of tan, oiled, well muscled young men, gathering to do things like 'throw javelins' and 'wrestle'. Mh-mmm.

One thing that has always fascinated me is the idea that the Greek City States would lay down arms for the duration of the Olympics. If there is any one aspect of this celebration to embrace in today's world, it would be the international cooperation and peace necessary to pull off something of this scale. Maybe if we all lay down arms for the two weeks of the Olympics, people will see

other options for getting over conflicts. Namely, being able to foot the bill for the more expensive training program so your athlete can beat up theirs. Maybe we could even have a generation of young people that didn't have to grow up worrying if they were going to get conscripted or shot.

Alternatively, we could bring back the greased-up Pagan nudity along with what must have been crazy orgies (I mean, they had a god dedicated to drinking and sex!) That would make the Olympics historically accurate and *far* more interesting. Timely too: Hot naked greased up athletic festivals are a perfect way to spend Valentine's Day.



policy

The *Omen* is Hampshire's longest-running bi-weekly publication, established by Stephanie Cole in December of 1992. In the past, submissions have included students' perspectives on the campus, administration, news, movie reviews, commentary, short fiction, satire, first born, artwork, comics, and the occasional embarrassing self-promotion. Everything the *Omen* receives, provided it is sent from a member of the Hampshire community, will be published unless it is deemed libelous or defamatory. Although we find such things amusing and entertaining for countless hours, it is just not an option in this forum. Libel will be considered clearly false or unsupportable writing that maliciously damages a person's reputation.

The *Omen* will not edit anything you write (except

spelling and grammar). You must sign your real name (no anonymous submissions) and understand that you are responsible for what you say. Nonetheless, views in the *Omen* do not necessarily represent the views of anyone, anywhere, living or dead.

There is no *Omen* staff, save those positions of editor-in-chief and layout editor. To qualify for community service you must be a consistent contributor and help regularly with layout. Layout times (and such) will be discussed at our meetings. Meetings are held every Tuesday after release of an issue in the Leadership Center at 6PM. Everyone, everywhere, living or dead, should come.

The *Omen* loves you.



# Where's the Love, Hampshire?

by Katie Booth

On December 16, 2005, an e-mail was sent out to the Hampshire Community informing us of the death of a student, Samantha Sandler. No further information was available at the time. Following the incident there was a deluge of postings on the Hampshire Daily Jolt by students seeking information and providing rumors. The most persistent and recurring rumor was that Sam died of a drug overdose. Still, the enthusiasm for hard drugs continues. Those who've posted their favorite drugs on the jolt recently list cocaine, MDMA, PCP, meth, heroin, dilaudid, morphine, and oxycontin; the list goes on. For those of you still convinced that Hampshire's biggest drug problem is weed, only one person mentioned marijuana. The drug problem at Hampshire is twofold: the denial that the drugs use can be a problem, and the lack of any easily available resources or discussion over the matter.

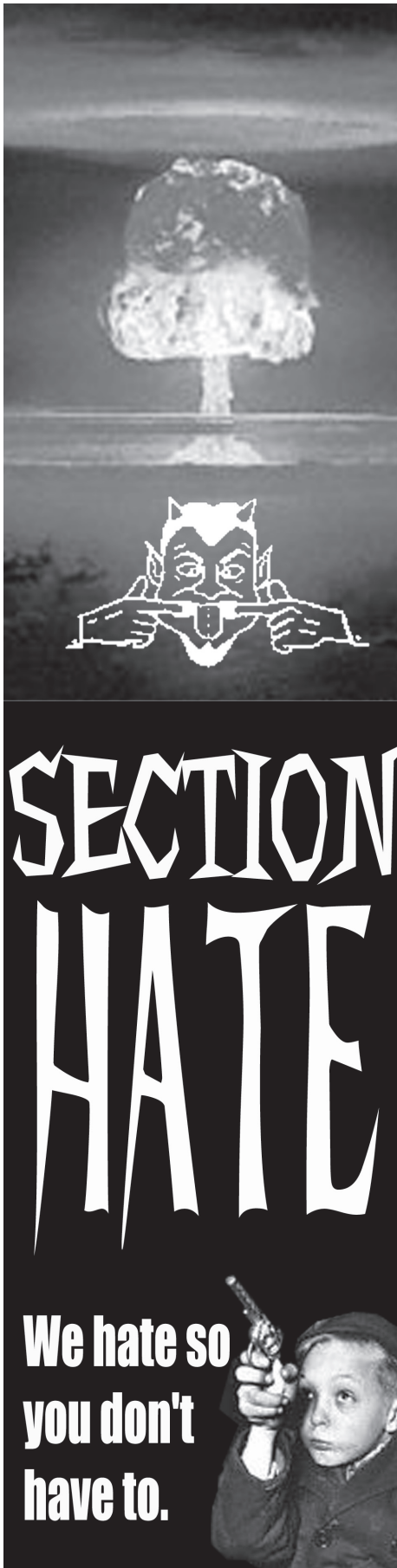
According to public safety reports, in the 2002, 2003, and 2004 school years there was a total of ninety-six disciplinary referrals for drug abuse violations excluding alcohol. Including alcohol there were one hundred and eighty three. There were two arrests.

This isn't a problem that exists in isolation; anyone can be affected by drug abuse, and that's why it's so serious. It comes in all different forms, from alcoholism to prescription drugs to meth or heroin. You don't have to be looking for addiction for it to find you; I know this from experience. It could be as simple as walking into the wrong doctor's office, getting the wrong prescription with the wrong instructions, and before you know it you're lying next to an empty bottle of pills and you're addicted. It's happened to me. I've been addicted to

drugs. Further, I've had several close friends within the five colleges who were severely addicted to drugs. I've spooned oatmeal into one's mouth when she was so strung out on opiates she couldn't sit up. I've walked in on a friend having a hysterical conversation with her hallucination of me, and then I had to try and explain that it wasn't that I wasn't *listening*, it was simply that I wasn't *there*. There were suicide threats and death threats, all on top of your average student workload. It's too much for a student to handle alone; whether it's the student who is suffering, or if it is a friend, roommate, or mod mate.

Addiction happens quick, and it's hard to see. Even responsible drug users can easily slip into it; it's a subtle shift. When a student does see addiction, either in themselves or someone they know, where do they go? To whom do they turn? Where's the support, Hampshire; where's the love? If something isn't in place specifically for drug abuse, it's not easy to seek it out. It's hard enough for someone to go to a confidential meeting, where s/he knows there will be support, but to go to someone who may or may not have any experience with drugs? No, it's not easy; it's damn near impossible, especially when a person lives on a campus where few are willing to admit that drugs can even be a problem. If the community can't admit it, how should an individual?

Drugs are a sensitive issue, one that requires the utmost confidentiality, and a student won't trust just anyone. There is a risk in talking about drugs. There's a risk of what it might say on the addict's medical record; there's a risk that their guardians may hurt more than they help. I've found that many well-meaning people offer asinine advise simply because





drug addiction is a complex matter with which most people never have first hand experience. It's not as easy as talking to a professor or an intern. The best advice I got was from a cocaine dealer, but I sure wish I could have gotten it from a professional on campus.

Hampshire has, or has recently had, resources for those suffering from the effects of racism, sexism, sexual abuse, class issues, eating disorders; there's a group for you if you are of mixed race, Christian, Jewish, Pagan, Asian, queer, and even Republican. But what if you are addicted? Hampshire's 2005 public safety report says: "for individuals seeking assistance with substance abuse issues, Hampshire College has a variety of resources. These resources include the student affairs staff, health services, and the Employee Assistance Program."

For anyone addicted to pharmaceuticals, health services is pretty much out of the question. A pharmaceutical addict has already learned how to get drugs from doctors, and no matter what the intentions may be walking into health services, the chances are they'll walk out with a new addiction, or more of the same old. Many non-prescription drug addicts are also experts at exchanging one addiction for another, and might also be intrigued by the possibility of walking out of a doctors office with some nose candy. Health Services, as it stands, is not sufficient help; it's too risky to send a drug addict there.

As far as the Student Affairs staff goes, there doesn't seem to be anyone specifically for drug abuse; it is not even mentioned on the website. Perhaps there are people who have been trained, but it isn't obvious who they are. If it isn't spelled out, it won't be easy for someone under the influence or under extreme pressures to know where to go. If the college plans on using this

office as a resource for substance abuse then there should be information about the resources on the website; today the internet is one of the first places many addicts will turn for help, because they can gain information confidentially. Getting help is not something someone will do spontaneously; it is often thought out for a very long time before there is any action. The college should always have information available and accessible, that way when someone does actively seek help there's no guesswork.

I don't know if the interns are part of Student Affairs, or if that's what Hampshire intended when it said that students could seek help for substance abuse there. It's too much to place on the interns, though. They are students, after all, with their own social lives, school work, and other intern responsibilities. Even the best intern is simply not equipt; it's asking too much. I knew an amazing intern whose best friend was severely addicted to prescription drugs, resorting to stealing them from strangers and friends, and snorting them by the mortarful in front of him. The intern tried his best to be a friend, to be supportive, but he couldn't deal with the abuse. It's a more complicated issue than thought: if he had told someone, he would have to deal with one angry, scary addict. And whom would he tell? To what end? Not to mention she would loose yet another friend, as he would thus be regarded as the enemy, incapable of helping her further. She needed professional help, but couldn't go to health services: that's where it all started.

All students affected by drugs need access to a qualified professional who specifies in drug abuse, and it has to be completely confidential. This is the type of project for which the five colleges could easily unite. Together, the four colleges average between seventy-five and ninety-five arrests and

disciplinary referrals a year for drug and alcohol violations in the past three years, according to the public safety reports. Considering that most drug abuse probably goes unaddressed, these are alarming numbers which call for action. The five colleges have a Committee for Sexual Assault Prevention and Intervention, which makes help available in case of an emergency and also makes counseling available to all five college students. There's a website that provides ample information on where and how to get help for each of the campuses; there are outside links and medical information. I think the drug abuse on the campuses warrants similar attention, and I'm sure if the five colleges pool their efforts and resources, we could get some real support and help out to students who might seek it. If nothing else, Hampshire should make its community aware of the resources available in the area. There are varying kinds of help and support available in the area, from the Northampton needle exchange, to The Community Substance Abuse Center, to services offered through the Freedom Center for benzodiazepine withdrawal, mental health needs, and free yoga and acupuncture. Unfortunately, many students never know about these resources.

The bottom line is this: the students and administration of Hampshire have to recognize that drugs can be a problem, that there are students suffering from addiction, that it's serious and deserving of attention. If a student is addicted to drugs, has recognized the problem, and is seeking help, then a good chunk of the battle is over; however, if help is hard to find then it might as well not be there. Help has to be easy. It has to be labeled in big, bold letters, flashing, with sequins. It has to be there from day one. It has to be at least as easy to find as the drugs.



# Listen to My Words of Criticism

by JS Hilliard

As I complete my third year here at Hampshire and continue to focus and refine my studies, I find fewer and fewer courses that line up with my interests/concentration. So it is a terrible thing when some of the few courses that I am interested in enrolling in are already filled up by the time I try to pre-register or register. It becomes even more frustrating when I realize the class is nearly half-full with first years with shit eating grins who don't know their head from their ass, nor where to locate reserves in the library (*HINT: It's right behind the big sign in the library that says: "RESERVES". Please allow me a moment of tangential material to mention this: if you wish to get a book off of reserve, please come to me with more than "I need to get a book for my class." "Oh really, do you now? Cause there are only dozens of classes at Hampshire and hundreds of books on reserve, but I'm a fucking mind reader so I can tell what book you want instantly. Would you like that in paper or plastic?" Know your course number, as well as WHAT SCHOOL IT IS IN. You would not believe how many students can't even remember what school of Hampshire their class is in. Then find the book you want in the reserve folder—you can't just tell me what class you have. I mean it usually takes me at least a month to memorize the reserves lists for all the classes.*)

For the love of God (or Allah, Buddha, me - really whatever the fuck deity you wish to worship) Mr. Hexter and company, please make enrollment times scale in favor of seniority. Many of my peers are having the same difficulties I have described above: their studies have become focused; there are a handful of classes they would like to take; these classes are filled up with first years who like to relate everything in their classes to "that time in high school". If another first year in one of my classes mentions something about [high school/the movies they have seen/their parents] that has nothing to do with the class (or very little)

I am going to force them to eat a steaming bag of herpes. What is a steaming bag of herpes you ask? You don't want to know – let's just leave it at that.

And what's the deal with Central Records? This department is open a whopping 25 hours a week. That's right folks, 10-12 (don't forget their convenient hour lunch break) and then 1-4, Monday through Friday. Why does everything at Hampshire have screwy hours? What happened to 9-5; real jobs with real hours? Damn, I'm brilliant. That actually sounds like a good motto for a revision of Hampshire: "Working 9-5: A Real College with Real Hours."

If Central Records is looking to shake things up, I could recommend a few staff changes. No other department has as unfriendly and unhelpful staff as Central Records. I speak in regards to one woman in particular – I would imagine that most of the employees are professional and courteous, but there is one woman in particular that I have heard horror stories about, as well as dealt with myself, and I can assure you I never wish to do so again. You work 25 hours a week doing NOTHING. Put a goddamn grin on your face and be helpful, as everyone else in the professional world has to do to be successful. Oh lucky you! The success of your office is in no way reflected in your ability, because we *need* Central Records. That's the problems with things like this, such as teachers becoming tenured – it removes any type of competition or the like so people can be idiotic and get away with it. (*Note: nearly all of my professors here have been awesome – thankfully, I haven't run into the problem of shitty tenured professors here.*)

If we are speaking of hours, I think I should allow myself a short aside to discuss the hours of Saga. I no longer rely on Saga for all of my meals, (as I now live in the mods) but the hours of Saga also

suck the big one (the big one being of course my unnaturally large reproductive organ). The dining commons should not close at 7 PM each night: what if anyone is hungry after the hours of 7? As anyone attending college should know, there are *many* hours after 7 that are usually filled with fun and excitement that invariably bring about hunger. Far too often the facilities of Saga fall well short of meeting a student's needs (not to mention their wants – that food is terrible more often than not).

Speaking of food – why the hell does the bridge suck lately? I mean, the young ladies working the register are usually pretty fine, so that's a plus, but they there is never anything good to eat there. The last few times I have stopped by the bridge to get a bite to eat, they have not been making paninni's *or* pizza. WTF is up with that? So my choices are a sandwich or a pre-made wrap. Plus, the ginger ale wasn't working the other day. It's a real disappointment. Please address this serious problem.

Fortunately, my story has a happy ending (at least in regards to registering for classes). Though I was far down the waitlist for the course I wished to enroll in, the professors allowed me to join (and all those on the waitlist that had showed up for every class) regardless of position on the list. Without their generosity and enthusiasm for a class larger than they anticipated, I would be up shit creek without a paddle, while first years frolicked in the calm, foul-smelling depths and enjoyed every minute of it (while I held out hope that they would drown, the putrid river flowing down their throats and clogging their lungs with excrement, perhaps opening up spots in the course so that I might join). I lift my cup up to you two in thanks (though I leave you unnamed).



# SECTION SPEAK



News, Commentary,  
Announcements,  
Propaganda,  
Editorials.

## Almost Ideal:

A Dialogue Concerning the Nature of Just About Everything

### Section Four: Calvin's Comeuppance

#### The Fourteenth Dialogue

*In which Xavier and Phillip examine the case against Free Will.*

**PHILLIP:** I feel now that we need to examine one more problem with the concept of altruism.

**XAVIER:** What might that be?

**PHILLIP:** In order for there to really be altruism – that is, in order for altruism to mean anything – there must also be at least the possibility of egoism. That is to say, there must be free will.

**XAVIER:** What you say seems true, but perhaps we should clarify before continuing.

**PHILLIP:** That seems best. What I mean, then, is that if a person acts altruistically, in order for that to have any meaning, there must at least be the possibility that it could have been different – that is to say, that he could have acted egoistically instead.

**XAVIER:** That is true.

**PHILLIP:** But that does not seem possible, for when distinguishing between two motivations, it is always the stronger of the two that results in action. Which is the stronger is a necessary result of the constitution of the person choosing, so that in order to have chosen differently the conditions preceding his choice would have had to be different as well. This means then, that there is no choice, for what we mean by choice is only the necessary result of those conditions that preceded it.

**XAVIER:** This seems at first as though it might be true, but not that it is necessarily. Why could it not be that sometimes one has two motivations of equal power, and then one makes a choice between them?

**PHILLIP:** But such a thing never happens; rather, when one is presented with two motivations of seemingly equal power, one deliberates between the two in order to distinguish which is in fact the stronger, which is what then moves one to action.

**XAVIER:** It seems that what you say would in fact be the case if there were no such thing as altruism, for then the only ultimate motivation would be self-interest, and all deliberation would ultimately be merely the reasoning out of what is in fact most in the interest of the agent. However, if there are two ultimate goals – the benefit of the self and the benefit of another – then there is the possibility for real choice between them.

**PHILLIP:** Even in that case, though, there is no choice, for it is still merely a question of which motivation is the strongest.

**XAVIER:** That is not true necessarily though, but is instead rather something that might or might not be true. Let us then discuss the matter and in so doing attempt to discover whether what you claim is really the case. You propose that whenever there are two competing desires the stronger of the two wins out, correct?

**PHILLIP:** That is right.

**XAVIER:** And why do you think this?

**PHILLIP:** Because when I think back upon all those decisions that I've made, I realize that in all those cases when there were two competing desires, it was the stronger of the two that won out.

**XAVIER:** Yet there are times when two competing desires seem of almost equal strength.

**PHILLIP:** On those occasions one must introspect and deliberate in order to distinguish which desire is in fact stronger.

**XAVIER:** Then in that situation the only way to know with certainty which was the stronger desire is to wait and see which one actually produces action.

**PHILLIP:** That's correct.

**XAVIER:** It seems then that you've reasoned in a circle, for the reason you think the stronger desire always wins out is because that is what you have observed happen in the past, yet the only way to know which was stronger then is to look back and see which one won out.

**PHILLIP:** What you say is true, but yet I still feel that what I said was true, for how could it be otherwise?

**XAVIER:** Quite simply; it could merely be the case that the strongest desire does not always win out, or that there are sometimes competing desires of equal strength.

**PHILLIP:** It seems that the truth of that is irrelevant to the question of free will though, for if what you say is true – that the strongest motivation or desire does *not* always win out – then the situation is worse, for then one is simply acting against one's own wishes.

**XAVIER:** That is not necessarily the case, for desires are types of perceptions and are therefore something outside of the self. As



they are not caused by the self, the only way one can really have wishes is when one chooses between competing desires. The question then is whether such choice does in fact happen, or if the self is no more than a captive audience upon whom perceptions are continually thrust.

**PHILLIP:** This sort of choice is unintelligible, for what we normally mean by “choice” is the selection by a person of one out of multiple options in accordance with his desires.

**XAVIER:** This, though, is not choice, for if the person always acts according to his desires and has no control over *them*, then his “choice” is no more than a reaction to the circumstances that could not have been different unless the circumstances that occasioned it were different as well. In order for it to truly be choice, then it must be the case that it could have been different than it was even if everything else had been the same.

**PHILLIP:** That sort of choice does not make sense though, for in order to be a choice between motives it must by definition be unmotivated.

**XAVIER:** That is correct.

**PHILLIP:** Yet, at the same time, in order to be *choice* it cannot be random either.

**XAVIER:** That also is true.

**PHILLIP:** Then it must not exist, for those are the only two options; everything is either the necessary result of what came before it (that is to say, “determined”) or it is not the necessary result of what came before it and therefore random (that is, undetermined).

**XAVIER:** That is only the case if there is no third possibility.

**PHILLIP:** But what third possibility could there be?

**XAVIER:** Simply put, that which we are talking about: choice. If there is such a thing as choice, then it must necessarily be different from those other things, for if it wasn't then it wouldn't be choice. The question is whether or not there is such a thing.

**PHILLIP:** Before we answer that question though, we must first determine whether there *could* be such a thing. The concept of it seems to me absurd.

**XAVIER:** Why is that?

**PHILLIP:** Because I find it impossible to form a concept of something that is neither determined nor random, but something fundamentally different from either.

**XAVIER:** Why is it though that you are able to form concepts of those things? What is the difference between the concept of choice and the concepts of determinism and randomness so that you are able to comprehend the latter

two but not the former?

**PHILLIP:** The difference is that I've experienced things that were determined and things that seemed not to be, but I've never experienced anything that was fundamentally different from both.

**XAVIER:** That, then, is the reason that you are unable to form a concept of such a thing; does it follow from that, though, that there couldn't be such a fundamentally different thing?

**PHILLIP:** It doesn't follow necessarily.

**XAVIER:** Then the question is not whether there could be such a thing, as we have no reason to think that there couldn't be; rather, we must ask whether there is such a thing.

**PHILLIP:** While that is true, the very fact that I never have experienced such a thing is enough to make me think that there isn't.

**XAVIER:** That would be a good reason to think that, unless we were able to state why it is that you have never experienced it, and in this instance such an explanation seems quite obvious.

**PHILLIP:** What might it be?

**XAVIER:** It is the same as the reason why one cannot directly experience and form a concept of the self, which is that something cannot perceive itself. If choice between motives exists, and motives are perceptions, then that which does the choosing must be removed from those perceptions and be instead that which does the perceiving – that is to say, the self. If, then, that which perceives and that which chooses are one and the same, it follows that one would be unable in-principle to perceive choice. It is impossible, then, to form a concept of choice in the same way and for the same reason that it is impossible to form a concept of the self – for indeed, if choice exists, they are one and the same.

**PHILLIP:** That, then, accounts for why, if there is such a thing, it is never observed. It still seems to me though that there are other reasons for thinking that there isn't any such thing.

**XAVIER:** What might those be?

**PHILLIP:** First of all, we decided that time is merely a property of perceptions, correct?

**XAVIER:** That is correct.

**PHILLIP:** That, then, would make the cause of those perceptions – that is, God – something outside of time.

**XAVIER:** That, too, is correct.

**PHILLIP:** If the causation of perceptions happens atemporally, then it would be the case that in a sense the future perceptions of the self have already been caused.

**XAVIER:** That is not exactly correct, for the reason that the present tense “cause” was used initially was because causation happens atemporally; it is therefore incorrect to speak of them as being caused either now or in the future, for it happens outside of time.

**PHILLIP:** I'm afraid that I find such a concept impossible to grasp.

**XAVIER:** That is because all concepts are formed out of experience, and all experience is temporal; it is therefore impossible for one to grasp the concept of atemporality for the same reason that one cannot comprehend the self or choice.

**PHILLIP:** That makes sense; if that is the case then, it strikes me that God is fully aware of the self's future perceptions in the same way as He is aware of the self's current perceptions.

**XAVIER:** That does follow.

**PHILLIP:** But if there is such a thing as choice, then it would effect what those future perceptions would be in a way that would be unpredictable. Since those future perceptions have already happened (in a manner of speaking), then there could be no such thing as choice as we've defined it. To put it simply, if God already knows what one will do, how can one choose otherwise?

**XAVIER:** That doesn't follow, for although the choice of which we speak is in regards to temporal things (that is, perceptions), choice itself is a property of the self, which is distinct from perceptions and therefore atemporal. Therefore, although if there is choice, then the future perceptions of the self will vary according to it, that is not incompatible with the atemporality of the causation of perceptions.

**PHILLIP:** I'm afraid that I don't understand.

**XAVIER:** If there is choice, then it happens atemporally in the same way that perceptions are caused atemporally, even though the subjects of choice are themselves temporal. Therefore, in the same way that the future perceptions of the self have “already been caused” (in a manner of speaking) the self has already chosen. God has already witnessed the choice of the self and altered its perceptions accordingly. Therefore it is not the case that God already knows what one will choose, but rather that one has already chosen in a sense.

**PHILLIP:** I see now. However, there remains in my mind one final objection to the concept of choice as we've defined it.

**XAVIER:** What is that?

**PHILLIP:** It strikes me now that if, as we've stated, choice relates to perceptions, then it must be the case that there is no such thing, for it strikes me that perceptions all fall into those two categories of things that we said choice was not: deterministic things and random things.

**XAVIER:** I'm afraid I don't fully understand.



**PHILLIP:** Let me clarify: to begin, we decided that choice – if it exists – is something that necessarily takes place outside of perceptions, correct?

**XAVIER:** That is right.

**PHILLIP:** But it also relates to those perceptions; that is to say, the things that are the subjects of choice are those same perceptions.

**XAVIER:** That is also correct.

**PHILLIP:** Then it follows from that that if there is such a thing as choice, it would effect those perceptions.

**XAVIER:** That, too, is correct.

**PHILLIP:** Then if something that is neither deterministic nor random effects perceptions, it follows that there would be perceptions of that thing; but there are no perceptions. Rather, all perceptions are of those two other types. Therefore, there is no choice.

**XAVIER:** That does not follow, for two reasons.

**PHILLIP:** What are they?

**XAVIER:** The first is that it does not follow that because something that is neither deterministic nor random acts upon perceptions that there would be perceptions of that thing, for if there were then that thing would be perceived and therefore a perception itself.

**PHILLIP:** That is true.

**XAVIER:** Choice, though, we have determined is something beyond perceptions, and is therefore not in principle itself perceived. If it was the case that it acted upon perceptions and altered them directly, then it would merely be the case that perceptions would be suddenly indeterminant; it would therefore merely alter perceptions in such a way that would appear to be random because the thing that caused the change (choice) would be in this instance unperceived.

**PHILLIP:** That is true. What, though, if there were no such things? Does not thoughtful observation of the world tell one that there are in reality no such seemingly uncaused events?

**XAVIER:** You refer to the supposed orderliness of the world and the immutableness of natural laws, but as we have seen already, such things can never be proved, and one can never know that perceptions are even continuous, let alone wholly deterministic. The empirical verification of such an all-encompassing hypothesis is likely impossible even in theory (and certainly beyond all practicality at least) and as we have seen already, one can never prove anything through empirical observation.

**PHILLIP:** That is true, I'm forced to admit; for the sake, though, of the argument, let us grant that we knew somehow with absolute

certainly that all perceptions are in fact wholly deterministic.

**XAVIER:** Granted.

**PHILLIP:** If this were the case, does it not seem that the possibility of choice is ruled out? For if one were able to know that perceptions are wholly deterministic, and one was able to know the current state of all perceptions – that is to say, if one had a “God’s eye view” of the current state of all perceptions – then one would be able to predict all future perceptions, and all actions would be wholly determined by natural laws. It seems that this would leave no room for choice.

**XAVIER:** Even if one granted a wholly deterministic world, that would not rule out the possibility of choice as we’ve defined it.

**PHILLIP:** How could that be? For in a wholly deterministic world there is no possibility that choice could act upon and alter perceptions.

**XAVIER:** Choice would be unable to act upon perceptions *directly*, but that is not the same as saying that there is no choice. Even if it were the case that all perceptions were deterministic those perceptions would still be caused by God, who (as we’ve seen) would already know what it is that the self would choose.

**PHILLIP:** I’m afraid I don’t quite understand.

**XAVIER:** Even if one grants determinism, then – as choice happens atemporally – it is still not necessarily the case that one acted as one did because that’s the way things worked out deterministically; rather, one could say that things are the way they are because of one’s choices. That is to say, one could make the case that one’s deterministic perceptions are the way they are – rather than some other way – because of the choices that one has already made (in a manner of speaking), rather than one’s choices – or rather, lack thereof – being what they are because of the state of and deterministic nature of one’s perceptions. Even in a wholly deterministic world, it is not necessarily the case that one could not have (or will not) acted any other way, but rather that one just *didn’t*.

**PHILLIP:** I understand now. It seems then that there is no reason to doubt the possibility of real choice.

### The Fifteenth Dialogue

*In which Xavier and Phillip examine the case for Free Will.*

**XAVIER:** Now that we have fully explored and dismissed the arguments against real choice, I feel that it is necessary for us to discuss the other side of the matter; that is to say, we should explore arguments that are in favor of it.

**PHILLIP:** That does seem best.

**XAVIER:** Let us begin then by recounting and examining that concern which led us to the discussion initially: that without real choice,

the distinction between altruism and egoism is meaningless.

**PHILLIP:** Perhaps we should spell that out more fully before we examine it.

**XAVIER:** That does seem best. The argument then is that without real choice, as we’ve defined it, the distinction between acting out of altruism and out of egoism is meaningless, because in either case one could not have done differently.

**PHILLIP:** It seems then that we must first examine whether that is really the case, and to that end, I shall begin by arguing the opposite. Is it not true that we have determined that this freedom, if it exists, is unknowable and incomprehensible?

**XAVIER:** That is true.

**PHILLIP:** And is it not also the case that whether there is or is not such freedom the world would be and people would behave in exactly the same way?

**XAVIER:** That is true as well.

**PHILLIP:** What, then, is the point in supposing the existence of such a thing, seeing as how whether it exists or not holds no implications?

**XAVIER:** Firstly, while it is the case that the truth of its existence is not *knowable*, it might still be the case that we can discover reasons for thinking it to exist or thinking it not to exist – that, after all, is our present endeavor. Secondly, it doesn’t follow from its existence being unknowable that the truth of falsity of its existence holds no implications.

**PHILLIP:** If there are such implications, what are they?

**XAVIER:** Well, for one, that which we are currently discussing. Since it is the case that all morality is founded upon universal altruism, it follows that in any situation the moral thing to do is that which universal altruism would incline one towards.

**PHILLIP:** That does follow.

**XAVIER:** It follows then that in all cases morality’s purpose is to encourage one to act in accordance with universal altruism and discourage one from acting otherwise.

**PHILLIP:** That is also the case.

**XAVIER:** If, though, it is the case that there is no real choice, then it follows that one has no say in whether one acts out of altruism or egoism, which means that one has no control over what one does, which means that one can never be held accountable for one’s actions.

**PHILLIP:** That does seem the case.

**XAVIER:** Morality, then, is meaningless, for if one has no say in one’s own actions, then to praise one type and censor another is

pointless.

**PHILLIP:** That does not seem true necessarily, for even if there is no choice then it could still be the case that moral urging helps to determine which motivation is the strongest and results in action.

**XAVIER:** That is undoubtedly true; however, morality itself is absurd if there is no choice, so that while it may be that morality would influence people regardless of whether or not there is choice, in order for morality to have meaning then it must be the case that one can choose whether or not to act morally.

**PHILLIP:** I'm afraid that I don't fully understand.

**XAVIER:** The question is not whether or not morality would affect people, but whether or not there could be morality if there was not also belief in choice. The very concept of morality presupposes such a belief, so if one were to believe otherwise then there could be no morality. Without choice, such concepts as praise and blame make no sense.

**PHILLIP:** I see now. That, then, is one reason at least to think that we do in fact have choice.

**XAVIER:** It also seems the case upon reflection that the concept of choice is essential to our everyday lives.

**PHILLIP:** What do you mean?

**XAVIER:** Is it not the case that, in the course of a day, there are numerous occasions in which a person will pause in order to make a decision?

**PHILLIP:** It is.

**XAVIER:** But does it not seem that in order to make a decision one must at least believe at the time that one can act either in one way or another?

**PHILLIP:** In what way do you mean this?

**XAVIER:** If a person is presented with two options, and he takes one, we say that he chooses that option over the other.

**PHILLIP:** That is true.

**XAVIER:** However, in order for a person to engage in the act of choosing, he must think at the time that he really is in fact choosing – that is to say, he must believe that he could take either one option or the other, and that even after he takes one it is still the case that he *could have* taken the other. It is essential that he think this way, for if he didn't then he would be unable ever to choose.

**PHILLIP:** Why is that?

**XAVIER:** In the course of day-to-day living, there are many times in which we are presented with two options that seem mutually good, and in order to choose between them we deliberate and think about which option we should choose.

**PHILLIP:** That is true.

**XAVIER:** However, if we thought that for any situation in which it seems that we choose, we are in fact only waiting to see what we will do, and that we have no control at all over what happens, then it would be impossible for us to deliberate, for in that circumstance it would seem pointless.

**PHILLIP:** It seems that this does not necessarily follow, for is it not the case that when we make a decision, and say afterwards that we could have decided differently, that what we mean is that we decided the way we did because that was what seemed best to us at the moment of decision, and we *would have* decided differently if another option had seemed best to us?

**XAVIER:** That cannot be what we mean, for if it were then we would be admitting that we could not have done differently unless we had felt different at the time – that is to say, if the circumstances had been different. We would not then be *choosing*, but merely observing what happens.

**PHILLIP:** That is true.

**XAVIER:** Yet if that were the case, then we would necessarily be equally irresponsible for those circumstances, for the same reason.

**PHILLIP:** That is also true.

**XAVIER:** In that case, then, we would never at any time actually choose anything. If, at the time when we *seemed* to be choosing, we thought about the situation in this way, then we would be unable to deliberate and choose because doing so would seem futile; then, that very feeling of futility will have seemed inevitable and unavoidable for the same reason, the realization of which will merely increase the feeling further, and so on ad absurdum.

**PHILLIP:** Yet it seems that this almost never happens.

**XAVIER:** That, though, just shows that we believe intuitively that we have freedom and really can choose in the way that we've defined it. This manner of thinking is, in fact, so resilient that even those who have decided on one level that they don't believe in choice continue to behave not merely *as if* they still believed they do, but rather in a way that shows they actually still believe that they do, their own affirmations to the contrary notwithstanding.

**PHILLIP:** It seems then that we must believe in choice; this, though, is not the same as giving a real reason for thinking that there in fact *is* such a thing, but merely for thinking as if there were. It could be merely that we are composed in such a way that we must think we have freedom, and yet this is irrelevant to the objective question of whether or not we really do.

**XAVIER:** If that were the case – that is, if

we were composed in such a manner that we believe intuitively and necessarily that we have freedom – and it were the case that we didn't, then it would seem a mystery as to why.

**PHILLIP:** On the contrary, an explanation seems forthcoming: we are composed so that we have to believe we are free because it is necessary for us to believe that in order to go about life.

**XAVIER:** This, though, fails to answer the real question, which is why would it be that that is the case? As the self and its perceptions are caused by God, if it were the case that there is no choice, it could just as easily be the case that those perceptions would be such so that a belief in choice would not be necessary.

**PHILLIP:** Upon reflection, that does seem necessarily the case.

**XAVIER:** As it is entirely inexplicable *why* it should be that a belief in the freedom of the self is necessary and inescapable unless it actually was the case that such freedom exists, it seems reasonable to conclude that it does.

**PHILLIP:** It does.

**XAVIER:** Greater weight still is given to this conclusion when one recalls the altruistic nature of God. If it were really the case that the self is not free, then such deception is still more inexplicable.

**PHILLIP:** That does seem the case.

**XAVIER:** That, in turn, leads us to one final point, which is to say that unless one postulates real choice, then the existence of selfishness is inexplicable; for if our actions are necessarily determined by God in such a way that it is really the case that we could not have done otherwise, then it would seem that an altruistic God would make those actions all altruistic.

**PHILLIP:** What do you mean?

**XAVIER:** It seems that without choice – that is, the ability to choose between selfish and altruistic motivations – one is unable to account for the existence of selfishness, for if it were true that all those things that seem to be choices are determined by an altruistic God, then the very fact that people sometimes act egoistically is inexplicable.

**PHILLIP:** That does seem to follow from what we have determined already. It seems then that we must conclude that we do in fact possess real choice in the way that we defined it.

## The Sixteenth Dialogue

*In which Xavier and Phillip examine the nature and necessity of Suffering.*

**PHILLIP:** It seems that there yet remains an unresolved conflict in our account which follows from our last conclusion.

**XAVIER:** What might that be?

**PHILLIP:** It seems that what we said regarding choice is correct, and that an altruistic God would not cause people to be selfish; the problem, however, arises when one carries this same line of reasoning to its logical conclusion.

**XAVIER:** Carry on.

**PHILLIP:** If it is the case that God is altruistic and also omnipotent in regard to the nature of the self's perceptions, then it seems inexplicable that there is suffering at all. Why would an altruistic God who could do away with suffering instead cause it like all other perceptions?

**XAVIER:** This does indeed seem a problem with what we have said thus far. In order to address it, I feel that it is first necessary to review those lines of reasoning that led us to conclude that God is altruistic in the first place. If we can discover a problem in it, then the topic of current inquiry ceases to be an issue; however, if we discover no flaw in the reasoning that lead us to that conclusion, then we must instead examine this current objection.

**PHILLIP:** That seems best.

**XAVIER:** Firstly then, is it not the case that we determined that God is necessarily a self-caused entity that is not dependant on anything else for His existence?

**PHILLIP:** That was our inescapable conclusion.

**XAVIER:** Did we not also determine that since God is the origin of all perceptions that to suggest that He is merely a blind force of causation is absurd?

**PHILLIP:** We determined that that must be the case because it is absurd to suggest that the self's perceptions, which contain such things as the mind and all of the order and regularity of the universe, are caused by something mindless.

**XAVIER:** Does it not follow from that then that the existence of the self and its perceptions are in no way necessary and entirely inexplicable – unless it is the case that God is altruistic?

**PHILLIP:** It does seem a necessary and inescapable conclusion. It then seems the case that we must examine the existence of suffering and see if some explanation can be given.

**XAVIER:** It seems that before we continue, we should distinguish between two sorts of suffering – that which is the result of selfishness and that which is inherent in nature.

**PHILLIP:** That seems best.

**XAVIER:** Then let us begin with the first of these. Does it not seem that we have already given an explanation for this?

**PHILLIP:** Please refresh my memory.

**XAVIER:** We determined that in order for

altruism to have any meaning, it must be the case that it is at least possible for one to choose otherwise – that is, to act selfishly instead. As we determined that there is in fact choice, the existence of selfishness then seems adequately explained already.

**PHILLIP:** It does seem such.

**XAVIER:** It is easy then to see how selfishness leads to suffering, for by its very definition it entails a disregard for the welfare of others. It then follows that if there are at least some people who are selfish at least some of the time, then there will be suffering that will result from this.

**PHILLIP:** That does seem the case. The real point of interest then is that suffering which is inherent in the self's perceptions of the world – that is to say, all that suffering which is unavoidable in the course of living.

**XAVIER:** Perhaps it would be best if we first gave examples.

**PHILLIP:** That seems a good way to begin. First of all then, there are all those bodily aches and pains that one encounters unavoidably in life, such as cuts and bruises and migraines, and also all those other afflictions that attack the body such as illnesses and disabilities, and all those things that cause death. Secondly, there are all those different types of emotional suffering, such as heartbreak, worry, and bereavement. Thirdly, there is the matter of death itself.

**XAVIER:** That seems a sufficient overview; let us then address each of these in turn, beginning with the first, which we shall conceive of as all bodily pain. Does it not seem that pain of this sort is necessary?

**PHILLIP:** It is true that bodily pain is useful at times as an indication that one's body has been damaged; this, however, merely sidesteps the question, for this condition also is dependant upon God. It could just as easily be the case that this sort of pain is not necessary.

**XAVIER:** That is true, but you have misunderstood the question. Allow me to spell it out more clearly: is it not the case that, in order for there to be pleasure, there must also be pain?

**PHILLIP:** Prima facie it does not, for pain and pleasure seem to be two fundamentally different types of sensations, and it seems that there could easily be the one without the other.

**XAVIER:** That seems like one possibility, but there is another: that there is no absolute pain or pleasure, but that rather the two are merely points on a spectrum, and that each gains its meaning from contrast with the other.

**PHILLIP:** It seems then that in order to resolve the issue we must first determine which of these it is that is really the case.

**XAVIER:** To that end then, let us examine the

sensations of hot and cold; do these not seem two fundamentally different types of sensation, one of which can exist without the other?

**PHILLIP:** Assuredly they are not, for whether something feels hot or cold is relative to what you are accustomed to.

**XAVIER:** That is true, but you mistake my meaning; the topic of present concern is the actual feelings themselves and not the circumstances that bring them about. Is it not true that, in a certain way, the feelings of something being too hot and of something being too cold have nothing to do with one another? That is to say, is it not the case that the feeling of cold is the feeling of something fundamentally different from heat and is not merely the feeling of the lack of heat, and that the same is true in the reverse?

**PHILLIP:** I'm afraid that I still don't understand.

**XAVIER:** The question then is whether or not it is true that the feeling of coldness is fundamentally different from the feeling of a lack of heat. Suppose, for the sake of the argument, that there is a person who, in the whole of her existence, has only ever experienced the temperature related sensations of being too hot and that of being just the right temperature; would it not be the case that that person, if given a disruption of the sorts of conditions that would make one feel cold, would imagine cold as being merely a more pronounced version of the feeling of decreased heat?

**PHILLIP:** It seems that she would.

**XAVIER:** And would not this imagined feeling be fundamentally different from the actual feeling of coldness in the same way that the feelings of pain and pleasure are fundamentally different?

**PHILLIP:** It would.

**XAVIER:** Let us then examine our example further and ask if such a situation is indeed possible.

**PHILLIP:** It does not seem that it is, for people experience the same temperature differently depending on what they are used to; if one were to experience a relatively limited range of temperatures throughout one's life, then it is always the case that your conceptions of hot and cold reflect that, and that the lower end of that range will be what is cold for you. This can be seen in the way in which people from one place might don heavy clothing and think the weather cold on a particular day while people from another, much colder, place might proclaim the same weather to be too hot.

**XAVIER:** It seems then that hot and cold are not absolutes, but exist instead on a spectrum, and that what is hot or cold is always relevant to what one is used to. Furthermore, it seems that one cannot have either hot or cold without the other.



**PHILLIP:** I'm afraid that I don't see why this is.

**XAVIER:** This is because hot and cold are only experienced through contrast; if one were to only ever experience one temperature, that temperature would feel neither hot nor cold regardless of what it was. In the same way, if that person were to suddenly experience a lower temperature it would feel cold to him – not because the temperature would *be* cold in an objective sense, but because it would be cold relative to the normative temperature.

**PHILLIP:** I see now.

**XAVIER:** It can be seen that the same is true of other areas of experience. For instance, if one is used to sleeping on a bed of a certain softness, and that is the softest thing that one has ever experienced, then that will feel soft to you. If, then, one were to suddenly experience for the first time a bed that was far softer, then that bed would feel incredibly soft. Conversely, if one it was the case that one was used to sleeping on the softer bed, then that bed would not feel nearly as soft, and the other bed wouldn't seem soft at all.

**PHILLIP:** That does seem the case.

**XAVIER:** This same phenomenon can be observed in other areas as well, such as taste and smell. It seems the case that in all circumstances we define our experience through contrast.

**PHILLIP:** What do you mean?

**XAVIER:** Notice, for instance, how we have words only for extremes of experience – that is, those things that differ from what we are used to. We have words for hot and cold, but no word for “normal temperature.” The same is true of our terms for all our various types of sensory experience.

**PHILLIP:** That does seem the case.

**XAVIER:** Does it seem then that, based on what we have observed, suffering and pleasure are in any way different from all these other things?

**PHILLIP:** What do you mean?

**XAVIER:** Is it not the case, upon reflection, that in order for there to be pleasure there must also be suffering, just as in order for there to be cold there must also be hot; that pain, like all other things, is not an thing definitely defined, but instead something that exists upon a spectrum which is only experienced through contrast?

**PHILLIP:** That does seem to follow from our discussion, but it still seems counter-intuitive. It seems when I imagine, for instance, that I were to suddenly find myself in a state of constant suffering that I would not acclimate to it, but would rather find it still to be suffering even after much time.

**XAVIER:** That, though, is because what you mean by pain is something that “colder” in a sense – that is, more painful than your point of reference. You exist now in one state, which is assumeably your normal state, which is also the state of not feeling anything; the reason you feel nothing in this state is because it is the normal state. Suffering, by definition, is just something down the spectrum from your normal state, the point of reference. If, then, you were to find yourself in constant suffering, it would be suffering because it is not your normal state, but would instead be in constant contrast to the state that you were in previously.

**PHILLIP:** I'm beginning to understand. However, I still don't see why one could not be in a state of constant pleasure.

**XAVIER:** One could, but only as long as there was a normal state of less pleasure that it could be contrasted to; otherwise, if the pleasure was the only thing ever experienced, then it would be the normal state and not pleasure.

**PHILLIP:** It would not be necessary to have suffering then, but only non-pleasure.

**XAVIER:** If it was the case that there was only ever the normal state and the state of pleasure, then the normal state would be between the pleasure and the initial state; normalcy then would become a sort of mild suffering. Also, the pleasure would be lacking because of the relative mildness of contrast; the pleasure would be far more poignant if it was contrasted with real suffering.

**PHILLIP:** What you say does at length sound convincing, and it seems it must be the case. However, there seems to be one remaining issue to address, which pertains to time.

**XAVIER:** Carry on.

**PHILLIP:** It seems that what we have said is right, but, as we have seen, all perceptions are of the present; how, then, is it that this contrast takes place?

**XAVIER:** While it is true that all perceptions are of the present, it is also the case that we perceive memories which, although ostensibly “of” the past, are perceived in the present as well. In a sense then the past is perceived at the same time as the present.

**PHILLIP:** If that is the case then, why would God not just give us memories of the past such that we could experience pleasure without our actually ever suffering?

**XAVIER:** Technically, we can't know that this doesn't actually happen; however, as it is necessary for us to assume certain things about time and the continuity of perceptions, it is enough in this case that we simply assume their validity.

**PHILLIP:** I see.

**XAVIER:** We have defined the nature of suffering then; does it seem then that what we

have said about bodily suffering applies also to emotional suffering?

**PHILLIP:** It seems that it might, but that they also might be too distinct from one another.

**XAVIER:** It seems really that they are not distinct at all, except in what sort of thing it is that occasions them, for they are both perceptions that are suffering. It seems then that the same rule of contrast applies here. For instance, is it not the case that Happiness is all the more enjoyable when it comes after a period of dejection?

**PHILLIP:** It does; what you conclude seems true then. We have then concluded that ultimately suffering is necessary.

*The Seventeenth Dialogue  
In which Xavier and Phillip examine further the  
necessity of Suffering.*

**XAVIER:** There remain still two more reasons why it is that the existence of suffering is necessary.

**PHILLIP:** Let us then examine each of these as well.

**XAVIER:** The first is merely the observation that it is a part of the nature of all forms of pleasure and enjoyment that they are more poignant if and when they are also temporary and impermanent.

**PHILLIP:** What you say seems true, but it occurs to me that, rather than this being something in the nature of pleasure, it is in fact merely a product of constant conjunction. That is to say, perhaps it is not that pleasures are the more pleasurable by virtue of impermanence, but it is merely the case that most great pleasures are short-lived.

**XAVIER:** That it is often the case that the greatest pleasures are short-lived is undoubtedly true; however, whether it is the case that they are great because they are short-lived or that they are short-lived because they are great is something not readily apparent. It therefore seems we must examine the issue so that we might perhaps discern which is in fact the case. To that end, then, consider the following hypothetical: there is a person named Bob who greatly loves a particular kind of juice. It so happens that this juice is very expensive, and, being of moderate means, he is able to purchase and enjoy it only rarely, and only on special occasions. One day Bob gets a significant increase in income, so that he is able to purchase and drink this juice every week, and he does. Later still, Bob receives a very large inheritance, so that he no longer has to worry about financial matters at all, and he then begins drinking this juice multiple times every day. At what point is Bob likely to be happiest?

**PHILLIP:** Intuitively it seems that he would be happiest at the end when he is able to drink the juice every day.



**XAVIER:** It seems that way at first, as it is in our nature to seek to repeat pleasures; however, is it not the case that, when we are allowed unlimited access to something, we rapidly grow tired of it and cease to get enjoyment from it?

**PHILLIP:** That is true; it seems that if Bob were to drink the juice multiple times every day that he would rapidly cease to enjoy it at all, and he would stop drinking it altogether. It would then be the case that he would in fact be less happy then because that which previously brought him happiness would do so no longer. He would then be happiest before when he was able to drink the juice only once a week.

**XAVIER:** That may be; however, if he was able to drink the juice routinely and with regularity, it seems that he would then take this pleasure for granted and it would lose much of its novelty. It would become for him something normal, so that when it happens it would be nothing special to him.

**PHILLIP:** Upon reflection that seems true. It would seem then that the juice would bring him the greatest enjoyment at the earliest stage, when he is able to have it only rarely.

**XAVIER:** It seems then that we have confirmed that it is really the case that something becomes more pleasurable by virtue of being something special and novel. Does it seem then that this same principle applies on a broader level?

**PHILLIP:** It does.

**XAVIER:** Let us then return to our original statement, which is that a pleasure is more poignant – and more really a pleasure – when it is temporary and impermanent. In order to examine this, let us look at another example: There is a small girl, Anna, who is in grade school. She very strongly dislikes school, and looks forward with great anticipation to the weekends, and even more to summer vacation. Does it seem to you that she will enjoy and appreciate the reprieve from school more on the weekend or in the middle of summer vacation?

**PHILLIP:** She may perhaps regard the summer with far more anticipation than she regards the weekends because of its greater length, but she will undoubtedly appreciate the reprieve from school more on the weekend, precisely because of its shorter duration and the more fleeting nature of it.

**XAVIER:** It seems then that we were right initially. Let us proceed then to the second reason, which is that suffering is necessary for choice.

**PHILLIP:** Why is that?

**XAVIER:** If it were the case that there was no possibility for suffering, and it also seemed that way, then choice would be meaningless, for it would never have any sort of consequences.

**PHILLIP:** That does not seem the case necessarily; could it not be that there would

still be choice, but it just would not have any repercussions?

**XAVIER:** The choice would mean something then only if it were the case that it seemed as if there would be repercussions; otherwise, if it were the case that there was no suffering, and that is also the way it seemed, then there would be no things to make real choices in regards to.

**PHILLIP:** Why is that?

**XAVIER:** Did we not determine that the important choices are between selfish and altruistic motivations, and that choices in regards to matters distinct from these are not really choices?

**PHILLIP:** A choice that was not between motivations would necessarily be one between different ways of reaching the same ultimate goal; the outcome then would be determined by what it was that seemed best suited to that end.

**XAVIER:** The important choices then are those that are between selfishness and altruism; if, then, there is no suffering, then it can never be the case that one would be able to choose between the benefit of the self and the benefit of others, for in all cases there would be no way to affect either, for all benefits possible are already had.

**PHILLIP:** That does follow. There now remains only the last issue, which is that of death.

**XAVIER:** This is a thing commonly regarded as being bad, but it doesn't seem itself to be a type of suffering (and if it was it would be covered by what we have said already); it is necessary therefore to determine exactly what it is before we can offer an explanation for it.

**PHILLIP:** That seems a good way to begin.

**XAVIER:** Let us begin then by stating what we know about death, which is that it is a thing that happens to the body of a person where the body ceases function.

**PHILLIP:** That is true.

**XAVIER:** As the body is among perceptions, we can conclude that if there are in fact other selves and they all experience perceptions of a body they call their own and also of the bodies of others, then the death of their body would mean that that self would have no perceptions of the body after its death.

**PHILLIP:** That does seem to follow. We now have come to the part which is regarded as the perceived evil in death itself (and not merely the process of dying), which is the cessation of perceptions.

**XAVIER:** This fear stems from yet another misunderstanding of time, for it is not the case that perceptions start and cease, but merely that included in all the perceptions of the self there are those of things starting and ceasing;

it is incorrect then to discuss perceptions as if they were a thing in time, for time is really just a property of perceptions.

**PHILLIP:** What, then, if it was the case that upon death the self ceased to exist as well?

**XAVIER:** That is not a possibility because of the definition of the self, which is also outside of time; it is therefore absurd to speak of it as existing one moment and not existing the next. Rather, in the case of death, the self will have perceptions of one moment and not of the next in the same way that one has no perceptions of dreamless sleep.

**PHILLIP:** Will the self then perceive nothing?

**XAVIER:** That also is nonsensical. In the case of dreamless sleep, the self perceives the moment before and the moment after, and there is no perception of a certain amount of time in which there is no perception, but rather just the one and the other. If it were the case that another person was staring at the sleeper, then that person would have perceptions of the time in between his falling asleep and his waking, just as a deceased person's bereaved family would have perceptions of time that he wouldn't.

**PHILLIP:** Is it the case then that one has only a certain amount of perceptions and no more? For if that were the case then, then that would be something feared.

**XAVIER:** There is no reason in particular to think this though, for why should it not be that there are other perceptions of other time that is distinct from the perceptions of that time leading up to death? The altruistic nature of God seems to suggest that such is the case, for His altruism is also outside of time; why, then, if he has caused some perceptions for the self should He not cause infinitely more?

**PHILLIP:** As we have determined that He has as part of His nature infinite love, it seems that such necessarily follows.

**XAVIER:** It seems then that death is something that is neither suffering, nor bad in itself; it is therefore not relevant to the question of why there is suffering.

**PHILLIP:** That is what we have determined.

**XAVIER:** It seems then that we have determined why there is suffering if God is altruistic, and that is because there must be suffering in order for there to be pleasure.

**PHILLIP:** It is necessarily the case.

**XAVIER:** If death bring about different perceptions, then perhaps these will be of pleasure; that is only possible though if they are preceded by perceptions of suffering.

**PHILLIP:** Amen.



# the men's Valentines Service

We told you we would help you in confessing  
your secret loves, feelings, admirations...

And so we have, in the following  
eight pages. Good luck.




Don't forget!

St Valentine hates you!  
*But... The OMEN loves you!*



It's that time of the year!  
Write your Valentine's note  
to your True Love here:

2. Sarah & Merritt.  
Hampshire Love  
& high tea  
Xoxo!




Romi  
(your name here) and the OMEN love you!

It's that time of the year!  
Write your Valentine's note  
to your True Love here:


To: Garamond  
Bcc: Century Grothing Copperplate,  
Footlight MT Light, Zapfino  
Attached: My Eternal Love (11.468)

You are the epitome of a beautiful  
& Perfect fart. If don't marry me,  
I will be depressed forever.  
Meet me at the  
Hampshire Tree Friday  
XOXOXO,  
Molly  
(your name here) and the OMEN love you!



It's that time of the year!  
Write your Valentine's note  
to your True Love here:


Marisa you are  
mad sexy!  
Love and SEX.



lella  
(your name here) and the OMEN love you!

It's that time of the year!  
Write your Valentine's note  
to your True Love here:

Babe, I love  
you, everything  
is going to work  
out according  
to plan.  
\$




Richard Lock  
(your name here) and the OMEN love you!

Please spell check:

It's that time of the year!  
Write your Valentine's note  
to your True Love here:

To my 'moteK' Becca.  
Amidst your Div III dementia  
know that I am entirely  
proud of you & I am  
assured that your future  
will be more than resilient  
Eternally thankful for  
knowing you..  
Avec amour



Romi  
(your name here) and the OMEN love you!


It's that time of the year!  
Write your Valentine's note  
to your True Love here:

Dear Erica,  
I think you're great &  
snuggly & cuddly & you  
give me just the rights  
& niblets.  
ps you look like  
Gaston!  
Erica  
(your name here) and the OMEN love you!



It's that time of the year!  
Write your Valentine's note  
to your True Love here:


Roberta



Coie Williams  
(your name here) and the OMEN love you!

It's that time of the year!  
Write your Valentine's note  
to your True Love here:


INTERNETS  
(101)



jolter-eton  
(your name here) and the OMEN love you!

It's that time of the year!  
Write your Valentine's note  
to your True Love here:

KDawg  
Poke!



K8  
(your name here) and the OMEN love you!



It's that time of the year!  
Write your Valentine's note  
to your True Love here:

With my plant, in my room,  
I LUV U  
KATE KRYOOOS!

Shira  
(your name here) and the OMEN love you!

TEXT ME  
HACU &  
NS 4 EVR

It's that time of the year!  
Write your Valentine's note  
to your True Love here:

Alana V  
I love  
you doll

U Bauck  
(your name here) and the OMEN love you!

LET'S SAGA  
DIV III ME  
BABY

It's that time of the year!  
Write your Valentine's note  
to your True Love here:

Dear Poptart Soulmates:

dead pyros society,  
tea party's,  
steathy nijn pranks  
4 Ever!

LOVE!

Shira  
(your name here) and the OMEN love you!

YELLOW  
(your name here)

HIPPIE LOVE  
I'LL BE YR  
MANFRED

It's that time of the year!  
Write your Valentine's note  
to your True Love here:

Dearest Ellen,  
Your Soul Tastes  
of Roses and  
Sugar Cane.

Satan  
(your name here) and the OMEN love you!

TEXT ME  
HACU &  
NS 4 EVR

It's that time of the year!  
Write your Valentine's note  
to your True Love here:

NPT-  
Two years and running!

DLC  
(your name here) and the OMEN love you!

LET'S SAGA  
DIV III ME  
BABY

It's that time of the year!  
Write your Valentine's note  
to your True Love here:

Dearest Casey R.  
let's get it  
on,  
balcony  
shelf  
style.

SHIRA  
(your name here) and the OMEN love you!

HIPPIE LOVE  
I'LL BE YR  
MANFRED

It's that time of the year!  
Write your Valentine's note  
to your True Love here:

Sam!  
Roses are Red  
Violets are Blue  
Sugar is sweet  
And you're DIV II!

Congratulations!  
You are so  
sweet!  
Love & Llanos!

Linnaea  
(your name here) and the OMEN love you!

HIPPIE LOVE  
I'LL BE YR  
MANFRED

It's that time of the year!  
Write your Valentine's note  
to your True Love here:

Allu,  
you can never  
eat too much  
noney.

Mod 104  
(your name here) and the OMEN love you!

HIPPIE LOVE  
I'LL BE YR  
MANFRED

It's that time of the year!  
Write your Valentine's note  
to your True Love here:

Dear Marvin  
Will you be  
Mine I Love you  
With love

Pumpkin  
(your name here) and the OMEN love you!

HIPPIE LOVE  
I'LL BE YR  
MANFRED



It's that time of the year!  
Write your Valentine's note  
to your True Love here:

ELLIE, YOU ARE  
SUPER HOT AND I LOVE  
YOU.

THANK YOU FOR BEING  
IN MY LIFE.



FIL  
(your name here) and the OMEN love you!

It's that time of the year!  
Write your Valentine's note  
to your True Love here:

OH VAG ORANGE,  
YOUR BEAUTY KNOWS  
NO BOUNDS. WE  
WILL REMEMBER  
always how you  
set our souls  
77 AFIRE.



77  
(your name here) and the OMEN love you!

It's that time of the year!  
Write your Valentine's note  
to your True Love here:

We Finnish people  
sure love Dad!

♥,  
Finnish  
people



                      
(your name here) and the OMEN love you!

It's that time of the year!  
Write your Valentine's note  
to your True Love here:

Ellen,  
Amherst  
College simply  
cannot afford to  
replace that 50-  
year-old map  
you wanted.  
Return it ASAP.



S. Sessions  
(your name here) and the OMEN love you!

It's that time of the year!  
Write your Valentine's note  
to your True Love here:

Rachel. I'm  
in love with  
you!



babys mama  
(your name here) and the OMEN love you!

It's that time of the year!  
Write your Valentine's note  
to your True Love here:

To my lovely  
Latm   
hermanas Karina,  
Payne, Marlen, Nataly,  
Allyssa, and Veronica,  
Feliz dia de  
amor simpatico!



Diego  
(your name here) and the OMEN love you!

It's that time of the year!  
Write your Valentine's note  
to your True Love here:

Dear ~~mom~~ Ian Warren,  
You are not hot shit  
but rather cold  
diarrhea.  
Thought you should  
know



                      
(your name here) and the OMEN love you!

It's that time of the year!  
Write your Valentine's note  
to your True Love here:

Hannah Gaschott -  
I love you



Your other halfie  
Rebecca



RRRebecca  
(your name here) and the OMEN love you!

It's that time of the year!  
Write your Valentine's note  
to your True Love here:

HAPPY Valentines Day  
Micah  
Way to be punk as  
fuck AND tough  
as nails






Mo  
(your name here) and the OMEN love you!



It's that time of the year!  
Write your Valentine's note  
to your True Love here:

*Te Amo Mi Amor!*





Virginia A  
(your name here) and the OMEN love you!

It's that time of the year!  
Write your Valentine's note  
to your True Love here:



*Jason Nickels-*  
*I STILL HAVE A Huge*  
*Crush on You Don't tell*  
*anyone, esp your girlfriend.*  
*OMGLOL.*

Jason Nickels  
(your name here) and the OMEN love you!


It's that time of the year!  
Write your Valentine's note  
to your True Love here:



*ERICA -*  
*IM WATCHING*  
*YOU.*  
*LOVE IS A*  
*BATTLEFIELD.*  
*TTYL.*

ERICA  
(your name here) and the OMEN love you!

It's that time of the year!  
Write your Valentine's note  
to your True Love here:





Dac  
(your name here) and the OMEN love you!

It's that time of the year!  
Write your Valentine's note  
to your True Love here:



*Christina,*  
*let's study*  
*together!*

Christina  
(your name here) and the OMEN love you!

It's that time of the year!  
Write your Valentine's note  
to your True Love here:



*Rebecca -*  
*you make my*  
*tummy flutter.*

Rebecca  
(your name here) and the OMEN love you!

It's that time of the year!  
Write your Valentine's note  
to your True Love here:



*Happy Valentine's*  
*Day Hife!*  
*I love you.*

Jaret Armour-Jones  
(your name here) and the OMEN love you!

It's that time of the year!  
Write your Valentine's note  
to your True Love here:



*Andy M.*  
*+ Chris*  
*you are too*  
*cute for words*

Andy M. + Chris  
(your name here) and the OMEN love you!

It's that time of the year!  
Write your Valentine's note  
to your True Love here:

*We Finnish people*  
*sure love Dac!*  
*♥,*  
*Finnish*  
*people*

We Finnish people  
(your name here) and the OMEN love you!



It's that time of the year!  
Write your Valentine's note  
to your True Love here:

Dear boy who rides  
the 38 from UMass to Hampshire  
at 12.30 on Mondays and Wed-  
nesdays (and who looks like  
Tom Vek),  
I totally have a crush on  
you.  
Totsig ougat lottu

Erica  
(your name here) and the OMEN love you!

TXT ME  
HACU &  
NS 4 EVR

It's that time of the year!  
Write your Valentine's note  
to your True Love here:

SHIRA:  
Do you Believe  
in life  
after love?  
I do.  
L8R!

SHIRA  
(your name here) and the OMEN love you!

HIPPIE LOVE  
I'LL BE YR  
MANFRED

It's that time of the year!  
Write your Valentine's note  
to your True Love here:

Amrit,  
our love is so  
true. we are  
two love  
birds.

Woman of  
your dreams  
(your name here) and the OMEN love you!

HIPPIE LOVE  
I'LL BE YR  
MANFRED

It's that time of the year!  
Write your Valentine's note  
to your True Love here:

Dear A4,  
you are so  
super cool and  
fun, I wish I could  
chill with you  
forever

Mo  
(your name here) and the OMEN love you!

TXT ME  
HACU &  
NS 4 EVR

It's that time of the year!  
Write your Valentine's note  
to your True Love here:

I LOVE DAIRY.  
IT MAKES LIFE  
WORTH LIVING  
EVERY DAY.  
THANKS,  
COWS!

"LACTO"  
(your name here) and the OMEN love you!

HUG A TREE  
LET'S STUDY  
TOGTHR

It's that time of the year!  
Write your Valentine's note  
to your True Love here:

Dear Kingdomania  
Why RU so  
effing awesome

Secret Whore  
(your name here) and the OMEN love you!

HIPPIE LOVE  
I'LL BE YR  
MANFRED

It's that time of the year!  
Write your Valentine's note  
to your True Love here:

Oh Annie Ron!  
You bring happiness  
to my life.  
It would not be  
the same w/o  
you.

Romi  
(your name here) and the OMEN love you!

HUG A TREE  
LET'S STUDY  
TOGTHR

It's that time of the year!  
Write your Valentine's note  
to your True Love here:

Anthony Angelo D'Alia  
~~Anthony Angelo D'Alia~~  
even if you'd rather not define,  
might you be my valentine?

MB  
(your name here) and the OMEN love you!

LET'S SAGA  
DIV III ME  
BABY

It's that time of the year!  
Write your Valentine's note  
to your True Love here:

Nick Curley,  
let's get  
awkward  
together.

LUV BRB  
OMG!  
SHIRA  
(your name here) and the OMEN love you!

HUG A TREE  
LET'S STUDY  
TOGTHR



It's that time of the year!  
Write your Valentine's note  
to your True Love here:

Miss Jacque  
Hsu  
Ciao bella  
te amo amor!  
M



M. Fortunato  
(your name here) and the OMEN love you!

It's that time of the year!  
Write your Valentine's note  
to your True Love here:

Dear Sam Campbell,  
My loirs quiver like sides of  
beef at your teriyaki stench.  
-♥ Ali.



(your name here) and the OMEN love you!

It's that time of the year!  
Write your Valentine's note  
to your True Love here:

to:  
Mod 84  
Love,  
Mod 100



(your name here) and the OMEN love you!

It's that time of the year!  
Write your Valentine's note  
to your True Love here:

Mobin  
to Tobin:  
You rock, let's start a  
Toboggan company.  
Don't stress, life's  
great!  
I love you!  
M



M. Briner  
(your name here) and the OMEN love you!

It's that time of the year!  
Write your Valentine's note  
to your True Love here:

Roses taste funny,  
and dandelions puff.  
You're sweet like honey  
and Brownies and stuff!  
(a poem about Joshy)  
EZ you!  
Gleep!



Flamie  
(your name here) and the OMEN love you!

It's that time of the year!  
Write your Valentine's note  
to your True Love here:

Dear BRIDGE  
Staff:  
Thanks for the  
smilez and  
Sandwichiez!  
TTYL!



SHIRA  
(your name here) and the OMEN love you!

It's that time of the year!  
Write your Valentine's note  
to your True Love here:

Cthulu recognizes  
the devout  
sacrifices of his  
disciple

Chris.  
(accompanied by  
slithering,  
sucking noises  
from the  
unnamed void.)



Cthulu  
(your name here) and the OMEN love you!

It's that time of the year!  
Write your Valentine's note  
to your True Love here:

HEATHER -  
TAKE ME  
THERE.  
I WANNA  
go  
THERE.



SHIRA  
(your name here) and the OMEN love you!

It's that time of the year!  
Write your Valentine's note  
to your True Love here:

ASHLEY MORGENTHAU  
I ♥ U AND  
YOU SMELL  
LIKE SUNSHINE  
AND LIQUOR.  
MOSTLY  
LIQUOR.



YOUR STALKER  
(your name here) and the OMEN love you!



February 18, 2006

loves you

It's that time of the year!  
Write your Valentine's note  
to your True Love here:

Dear Gaston,  
while the manner in  
which you treat ~~is~~  
Belle is deplorable,  
I am currently modeling  
my Hard Bod on  
Yours & that's 4  
the inspo  
Erica  
(your name here) and the OMEN love you!



It's that time of the year!  
Write your Valentine's note  
to your True Love here:

Melanie ~  
me and Anna love you!  
Will you be our valentine?  
I know we're not 4th grade  
teachers, but...

(your name here) and the OMEN love you!



It's that time of the year!  
Write your Valentine's note  
to your True Love here:

Bush  
Fuck You you fucking  
Bastard

Steve  
(your name here) and the OMEN love you!



It's that time of the year!  
Write your Valentine's note  
to your True Love here:

Dear Flit,  
it's just around  
the riverbend

Pocahontas  
(your name here) and the OMEN love you!



It's that time of the year!  
Write your Valentine's note  
to your True Love here:

Dear Mod 48,  
Hey, at least I'm  
not frozen and expanding  
in your Omen copy...

Shauna  
(your name here) and the OMEN love you!



It's that time of the year!  
Write your Valentine's note  
to your True Love here:

I am Getting  
NO ass. fuck  
this.

(your name here) and the OMEN love you!



It's that time of the year!  
Write your Valentine's note  
to your True Love here:

Mike Berkoff  
YOU R ~~DO~~ HOT  
DO HOT  
love  
(your name here) and the OMEN love you!



It's that time of the year!  
Write your Valentine's note  
to your True Love here:

Valerie Ewing,  
I want to  
stick it in you  
The hoe  
Love ~~the~~ next  
door.  
(your name here) and the OMEN love you!



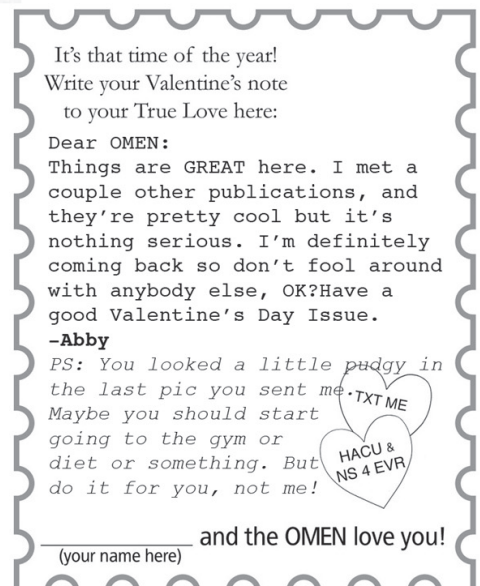
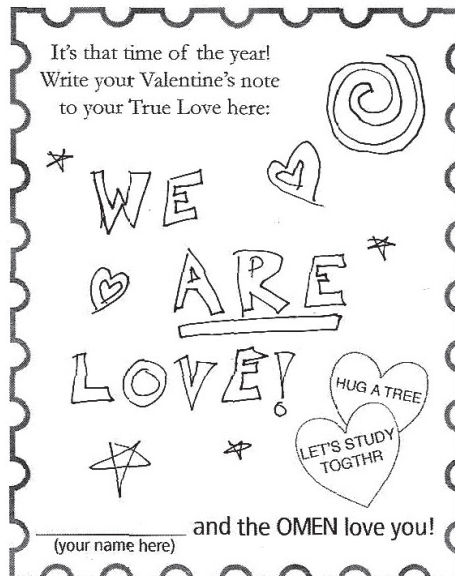
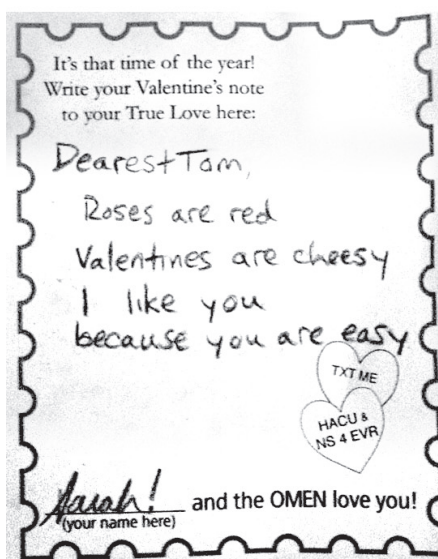
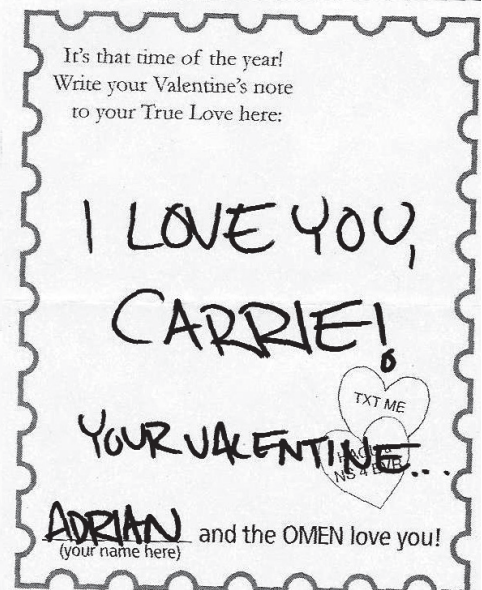
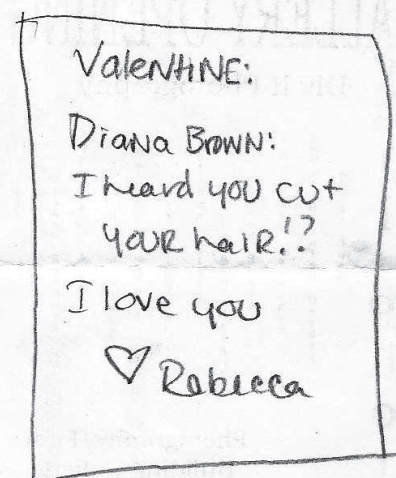
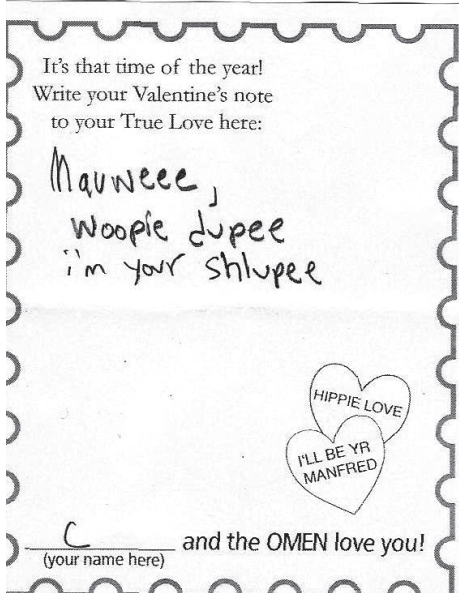
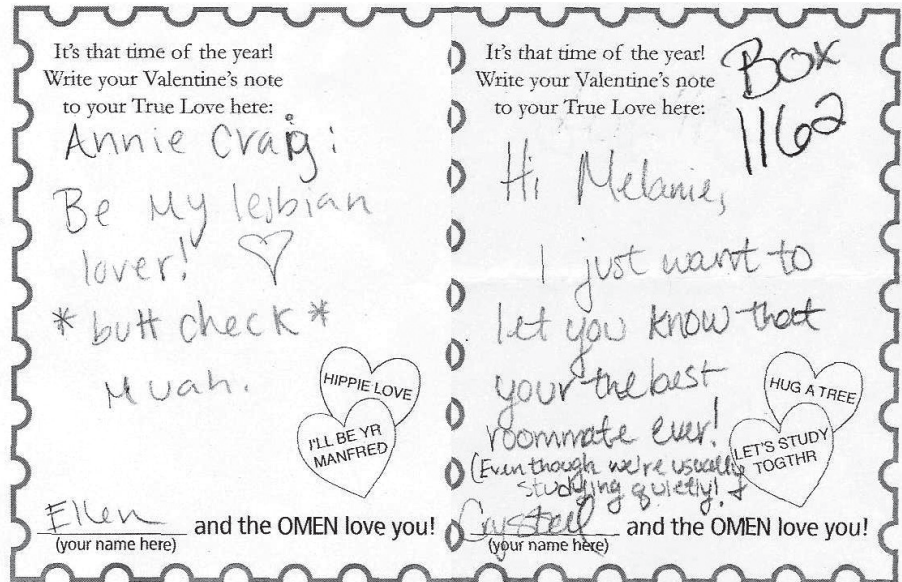
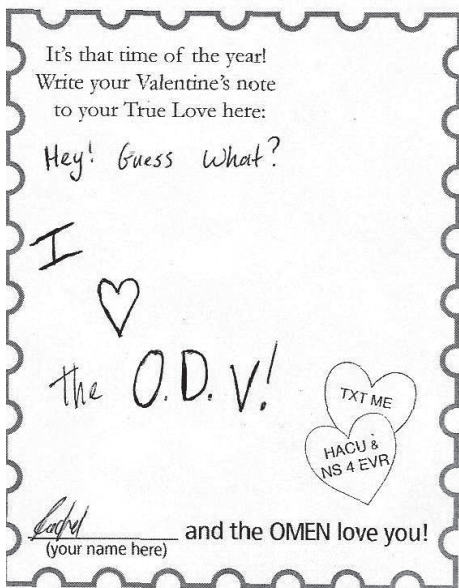
It's that time of the year!  
Write your Valentine's note  
to your True Love here:

Wikipedia,  
You make research  
simple and easy. For  
this we would  
bear your  
children.

Omen Staff  
(your name here) and the OMEN love you!







February 18, 2006

loves you

# Tips on Attracting a Valentine in Four Easy Steps:

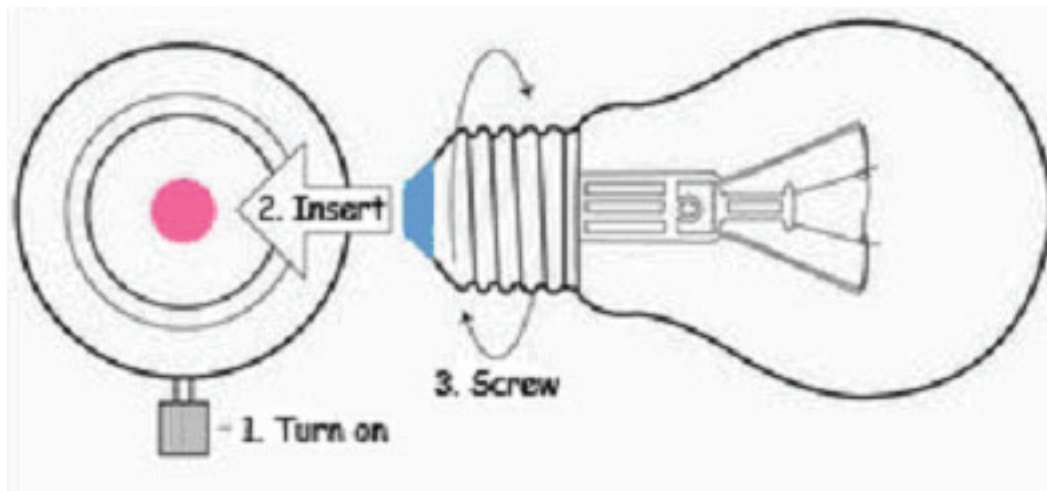
from one who should never give advice

Step 1: Find people who never get laid. I have found the best places to find this particular species are the following: the library, Cole Science, Lemelson, and ASH. These types are generally more “receptive” to advances from their preferred sex.

Step 2: Make friends, quickly. If you have properly carried out Step 1, your subject will be starved for attention and this should be easy. In addition, this step is invaluable for proceeding on to Step 3.

Step 3: Bluntly inform your subject of your intent to copulate. If you have appropriately followed steps 1 and 2, he or she is unlikely to find this disturbing. You may surprise your subject, but don't be alarmed, this will not hurt your chances of success.

Step 4:



## ATTENTION Hampshire Males!

You don't want a strikingly gorgeous lass like me to be alone on Valentine's Day, do you? Of course not. That's why I've compiled a list of characteristics I'm looking for in a man. If you feel you meet my ever-so-reasonable requirements, e-mail me at [seh04@hampshire.edu](mailto:seh04@hampshire.edu), and I'll think about it, and maybe give you a cookie. Maybe.

My man must do these simple things--

I am not too hard to please:  
He'll wield a sword like Aragorn,  
And arm-wrestle Hercules.  
He must be a king among Kings,  
(One man Arthur comes to mind);  
His handsome brow a crown adorns,  
For he's regal and refined.

He has manners like Prince Charming,  
With a gentle, tender heart;  
At "jump!" he pulls a Mario,  
And he's into surreal art.  
He's a smile that's so disarming,  
And a dreamy voice to match,  
That while we chat about Miro,  
I'll be thinking, "What a catch!"

He can cook like an Iron Chef,  
And then fly like Peter Pan.  
He likes to consult Ouija boards  
And he hates the Ku Klux Klan.  
It would help if he's not tone-deaf,  
And a lover like Don Juan.  
He can hold off zombie hordes  
And write poems like Byron.

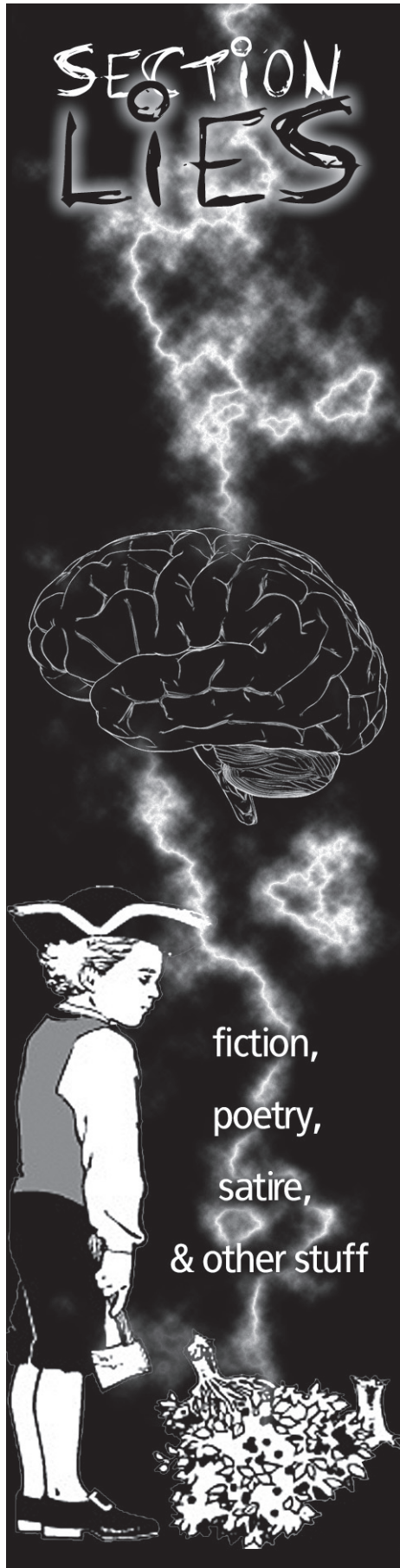
He starts a new cult in my name,  
Sings my praises by and by.  
He quips lines just like Oscar Wilde,  
And is wise as a Jedi.  
He never brings me any shame,  
And there's one final sexy plus:  
He always leaves me so beguiled,  
Water-walking like Jesus.



by Sarah Weiss

by Amy Hoffman





# Chapter Seven

“And you lived happily ever after?” Anaril asked.

“Would I be telling you this if I did not?”

“One always has control over how a story is told. You could end right here and who could say that you and Petra did not live happily in this country home until she recently died of natural causes?”

“Yes, there is always the temptation to tell sweet lies, but I fear that I only have enough time to tell the truth.”

“In your mind,” Anaril said.

“Yes, in my mind,” Tajere answered.

“So where did this fine fairy tale go wrong?”

“It all went wrong with the Occupation. It pulled us apart.”

“But if were not for the Occupation you would have never met. Correct?”

“We never would have become close, it is true. But what good is closeness when one ends up lonely all the same?”

“The philosophers say that you know you love someone when one glorious moment with them can atone for a life of misery.”

“It depends on how that love is lost,” Tajere paused, “but enough of this foolishness. I know I am not your superior in feats of mind, never having dwelled within universities, but I do have a story to continue, if you still want to hear it.”

“Never allow your intellectual superiors to distract you from your necessary tasks,” Anaril said with a smile.

Three days after that night, I left Izerah and Enherio, thanking them for their hospitality. Izerah was gracious enough, but I could feel the rift between us nevertheless. It was the last time we would ever see one another. Enherio was happy to see me go, as you can imagine, although he believed that my relationship with Petra was even more traitorous. Ironically, however, it would be he and I who would cross paths once

again.

Petra was able to get her commander; an Elvish man named Keolith, to agree to speak with me about the possibility of staying with her. She was pleased about the arrangement because it meant that she no longer had to room with a dwarf whose slovenly manner she did not care for. However, Keolith’s permission was dependent upon an interview he wanted to give me. He walked into the tent with a confident strut, eyeing me with suspicion. He was rather tall, much taller than I was. His skin was possessed with a silver glow and his hair was grey, with white streaks throughout. However, despite this he did not look elderly. In fact, his skin was quite youthful, without the slightest blemish or flaw. He was adorned in a robe decorated with marigold, silver, and sapphire colored symbols and patterns. The robe fell around his ankles and underneath it, he wore a suit of leather armor and a black skirt. In his hand, he held an ivory staff with the contours of a lion intricately carved into the shaft, finally ending with the lion’s open jaws. In the clutches of this lion’s jaws was a large and vivid red stone. He looked to Petra and said something to her in a language I did not understand.

“What business is it that you have here?” Keolith asked me. I was taken aback. I had not heard any non-Tuelan other than Petra speak my language and I was not expecting this man to be able to speak it.

“He is my friend. I saved his life as the war was near its end,” Petra said.

“Silence,” Keolith said, “I was not speaking to you.” He then looked at me again. His face was hostile. His eyes cast stones at me, judging me for sins I had never committed.

“Why are you here?” he asked me again. His voice was hot with anger and irritation. It frightened me.

“I, I have nowhere else to stay, sir. My

people regard me with suspicion and hatred. Only through a strict blood oath that may never be broken was I saved from living upon the streets. I have no home and I have no friends. At least not anymore. That is why I ask for you to show pity for me and allow me to stay here, so that I may have shelter.”

“How do I know that you aren’t a spy being planted within our encampment?” he asked. Petra gasped, but Keolith ignored her. I was struck silent by the accusation. I only had enough power to stare at him as he smiled upon me. Once again, Petra had to intervene on my behalf.

“He was active in the Resistance. He lost his wife and was brutally tortured for nearly a year! He almost died. How could you blame him for what happened?” Petra said.

“And do you have proof of your so-called resistance activities?”

“You could have asked those in charge of the Empire’s government, had they not been burned to death,” I replied. Petra grimaced, but Keolith’s smile just grew wider.

“Did you sympathize with those men who were executed?” he asked with a haughty laugh.

“I had no love for them, but I thought their fates could have been handled better.”

“And how would you have handled them?” I looked down at the floor.

“I don’t know,” I finally said in a meek, soft voice.

“How long were you active in the Resistance?” Keolith asked, his brisk voice changing the subject. So he didn’t completely disbelieve me, but why was my memory so cloudy?

“About two years, I believe, though my memory is not very good,” I finally replied.

“Only two years? Why did you not join sooner?” Keolith said, leaping at another chance to shame me.

“At first we supported Arxantes because Tuela was once the site of much chaos and bloodshed. I began to question

when the war began because my wife, Eleanor, had a Sylvan mother. You must realize that resisting Arxantes was very difficult. It was not until Eleanor’s murder that I finally began to be active and our activities ended within a year of their beginnings.” I knew that my admission that I had initially supported the Empire may have sealed my fate, but I told the truth nonetheless. Keolith smirked at me.

“How do I know that you do not desire to engage in an improper relationship?” he asked. Petra gasped once again.

“I—I’m unable to perform in such a manner.” Keolith laughed. That statement seemed to be enough for him. He then continued with the questioning. “Have you no property or money of your own? Do you expect to be able to freeloader off of our army?”

“Arxantes and the Rikar confiscated my home after my arrest. I have nothing.” Keolith laughed.

“Then it is a simple matter. Tell me where your former home is and we will have it returned to you in good time.” I thought of the little boy on my front yard with the hungry, tearful eyes. The little boy who had seen his brother sent away, never to return. I could not live with myself if I were responsible for sending him and his family into the streets.

“I do not want to deprive innocent people of their livelihood on account of the Empire’s injustice.”

“There are no innocent people in Tuela. If you refuse our offer, I will assume you have hidden motives for wanting to stay here. I will ask you one final time, do you want us to give you your old house back?” I shook my head.

“No, I will leave you now.”

“Then you have made your decision.”

He turned to leave, but Petra grabbed him and began yelling at him. What was said I do not know, but Keolith just replied in his normal tone of voice. Petra’s face was a deep shade of red now. It looked as if she were about to run her sword through Keolith’s body. She screamed out one last angry word

as Keolith exited the tent. However, her scream must have drawn him back in as he returned and said something else to her. Something that made her eyes squint and her mouth twist in revulsion, but she nodded hesitantly. Keolith smiled at her and turned to me.

“Perhaps I was too hasty in dismissing you,” he said to me as he put his arm around me, “I think it may be possible for you to stay with us for a period of time.” His voice then became less artificial and more somber.

“But first, however, you must take an oath of loyalty to the United Alliance.” He pulled out a copy of the Wieras, the collection of holy writings inspired by Elohim and the other members of the Nine. I ended up taking his oath. I did not do it without hesitation. It reminded me of Sere’s attempt to get me to repeat the Hiraz Creed, but I complied, much to my later regret. As Keolith left, he said something to Petra and laughed. Petra scowled at him, but as soon as he left, she hugged me and gave me a warm kiss upon the cheek.

If only Petra’s reaction were universal. I knew that the others in the encampment felt more like Keolith did about me and I knew that these opinions were taking their toll upon her. Rumors spread of our supposed love affairs and it had become apparent that the others in the camp found Petra’s friendship with me to be traitorous. As for what rumors were spreading about me among my fellow Tuelans, I did not want to think. We grew to the point where we saw less of each other as the next few months passed along. During the day, she was out teaching Alliance troops how to speak Tuelan and during the night, she often left the tent, for what reasons I did not know. I thought that they gave her this much work on purpose, in order to separate us from each other. As for myself, I was still thinking of Eleanor...

*Stay tuned for Chapter 8  
next issue!*



# I Could Never Get the Hang of Thursdays:

*A fortnightly column by Douglas Adams\*, who would like to apologise for previously calling it a bi-weekly column, which is inaccurate, as The Omen does not come out bi-weekly.*

by Rachel Rakov

Well, I take this as a good sign. I've written my first column, and I haven't gotten any comments with complaints or threats. I can draw two possible conclusions from this; either I have written a successful column, or I'm not trying hard enough.

Regardless. Today's topic is not quite as thought provoking as last weeks, but is indeed an issue that has too long been shunted to the back of the head and written off as insignificant.

I enjoy lunchtime. I've been thinking for a long time about why I have such an unbridled affection for the meal, and I've finally decided that it is because of the sandwich. Lest you be confused by this proclamation, I have devised a short list of the many advantages of the sandwich:

a) Sandwiches are completely portable. This has always been an advantage to me, as a writer; if I'm working, and I'm right in the middle of a good bit of writing but suddenly find myself peckish, I can nip off to the kitchen, chuck something between two pieces of bread, and return to my computer and my work, typing with one hand as I steadily eat away at the sandwich I'm holding with the other. (This occasionally leads to the problem of crumbs, but I do my best to ignore them.) Or an even better example of the portability of the sandwich; if I am sitting at my computer, failing once again to write the novel that was promised to my editor weeks ago, and I find myself a bit peckish, I can nip off to the kitchen, chuck something between two pieces of bread, and go for a long walk, missing the mid-afternoon phone call from my editor, who is threatening to burn down my flat

if I don't finish the book soon.

b) Sandwiches are extremely versatile. Anything can be a sandwich if you are so inclined to make it one. I knew a chap whose favorite sandwich was peanut butter and mayonnaise between two pieces of rye bread. And nobody questioned this revolting combination of food items, because it was a sandwich, and people can do anything they like with sandwiches.

“  
I enjoy lunchtime.  
”

I'm going to contradict myself here, as I have a tendency to do. As I have said, one can do anything one likes with the eternal sandwich, with the single exception of the sandwich that really has no business existing in the first place. I am, of course, referring to the B.L.T.

Bacon, lettuce, and tomato. Now, I will have it known that I have nothing against any of these items individually. I enjoy crispy bacon, fresh lettuce and juicy tomatoes as much as the next non-vegetarian. I'm not even opposed to the combination of such items. No, my problem is much more deep-rooted; I do not believe that a sandwich can be made completely out of toppings.

For that's what the B.L.T. is – it is a sandwich made up entirely out of things one would put on another sandwich to enhance its features. One would put a tomato on a roast beef sandwich to accentuate the enjoyment of the sandwich and to bring out the flavour of the beef. One would put lettuce on a grilled chicken sandwich to sop of the excess grease

and to make the sandwich extra crunchy. And everyone knows that a turkey club sandwich is not complete without the addition of bacon.

So how can all of these items be combined to make their own sandwich? Simply, they can't. I don't know who got the vague notion that he could combine all of these items without a base lunchmeat and that the result would be a brand new sandwich. It's abnormal.

Now, I'm English. I've eaten Spotted Dick. I've enjoyed a good steak and kidney pie. I even enjoy marmite. But I will not touch the bacon, lettuce and tomato sandwich. It is against the basic principle, the simple unwritten yet underlying rule of The Eternal Sandwich.

The Finnish word for sandwich is voileipä: Literally, it is translated as “double bread”. Apparently, in Finland, they're still working on the basic principle of the sandwich and are not quite up to putting something between the bread, as of yet. But being as how most of the community members are not Finnish, I ask you this question: what is your favourite sort of sandwich?

Please keep in mind that if you say the B.L.T., I shall revoke your right to ever come 'round for lunch at my flat.

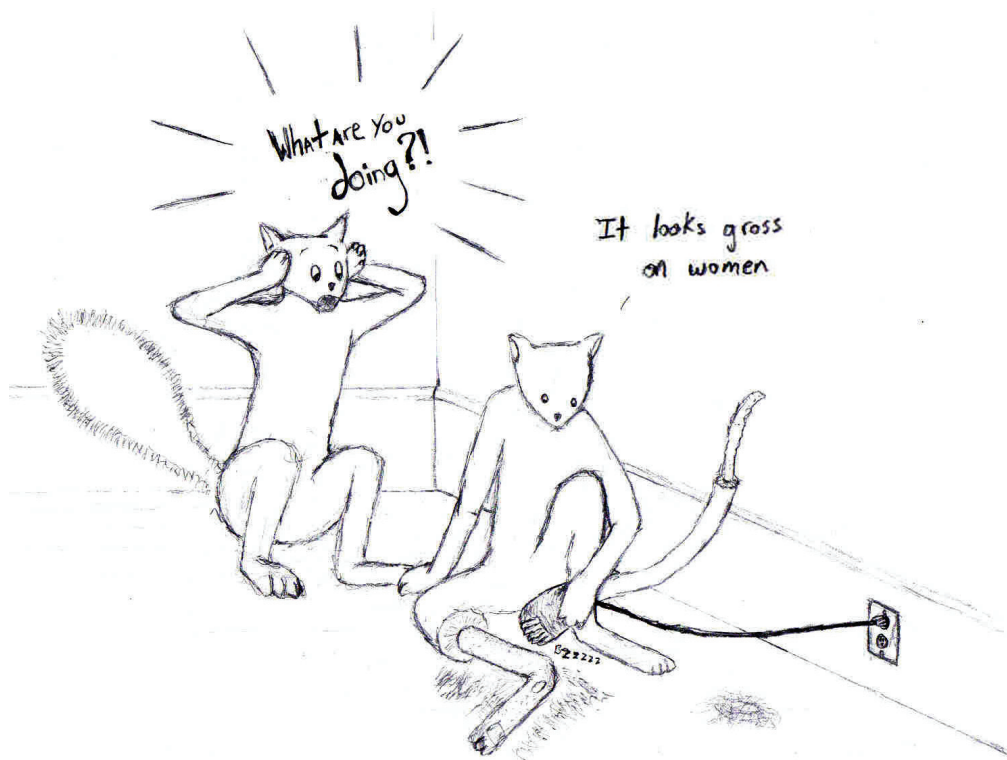
\*Douglas Adam's spirit is channeled by Rachel Rakov. Any questions, comments, or complaints should be directed towards her will likely be ignored.







by Molly McLeod



by Jacob Lefton

